

Assignment pay for fire fighters and police officers
(SB 698 by Washington/A. Luna)

DIGEST: SB 698 would have made it mandatory for cities with a population of more than 1.5 million (Houston) to authorize assignment pay for helicopter personnel, bomb squad personnel, special weapons and tactics personnel, field training officers and bilingual translators and interpreters. The bill would have allowed all cities with a population of less than 1.5 million to authorize assignment pay for field training officers, instead of only those cities operating under the state civil service statutes.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:

The governor said civil statutes regulate assignment pay to fire fighters and police in Texas cities that have voted to adopt the provisions. "This bill would mandate what has been a previously permissive law regarding the authorization of assignment pay for certain personnel. I feel the cities are perfectly capable of deciding these issues themselves under the permissive law, and that this is an unwarranted intrusion into city affairs," the governor said.

AUTHOR'S
VIEW:

A staff member of Sen. Craig Washington said the senator and police organizations took the position in 1985 that the City of Houston should be allowed to negotiate in good faith over assignment pay. The city then reneged on its 1985 agreement and did not pay assignment pay. The senator's position is that since the city had gone back on its good-faith promise of assignment pay, mandatory assignment pay should be in the statute.

NOTES: SB 698 passed the House on the Consent Calendar and was not analyzed in a Daily Floor Report.